

Classroom Transaction in relation to Gender Issues

A. Gender Issues in Classroom Transaction

- 1. Stereotyping :** Most often students in the classroom are stereotyped based on their Gender. The girls are considered calm and well - mannered while the boys are thought of as noisy and hyperactive. The jobs assigned to the girls and boys too reflect this stereotyping. The girls are assigned jobs like sweeping and cleaning while boys are asked to carry things.
- 2. Gender Bias in Classroom Language :** The words used in any language are predominantly masculine in nature. For e.g. mankind, brotherhood etc. This also carries into the classroom knowingly or unknowingly. Gender specific terms get used even when they could be replaced by gender neutral terms.
- 3. Gender bias through Body Language :** Teacher in the classroom has more of her attention towards boys because of the pre - notion that boys get distracted easily while girls remain well behaved.
- 4. Gender unfriendly seating arrangement :** Boys and girls are made to sit separately which reduces their mutual interaction. This could also divide the teacher attention as the teacher could be inclined towards one gender and rest might be devoid of opportunities.
- 5. Stereotype in transaction of subjects :** There is a myth that boys are good in mathematics and science while the girls are good in languages. This belief leads to stereotyping in the transaction of subjects. Boys get more opportunities in mathematics and science subjects while the girls are given more opportunities in languages.
- 6. Gender Stereotypes in addressing students :** Adjectives like beautiful, pretty, obedient, and submissive for girls and brave, courageous, strong, handsome for boys are used which lay a burden of Gender expectations on students.

B. Gender Friendly Classroom Transaction

- 1. Establish Gender Friendly Rules :** It is important for a teacher to establish a set of rules from the very beginning that promote equality. An effective way to do this is to create class rules with students. Ask students to suggest ideas for how to keep an equal and respectful classroom. This permits the teacher to point to the rules as something that the whole class has agreed on. It is very important to include rules of respecting the students, respecting the teachers and participating in class.



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2. **Have a classroom seating plan that supports equal participation** : If you find that certain students regardless of their gender are not participating in class try to change your class seating plan. Teachers tend to interact the most with students sitting closest to them. For this reason, it is important to change the seating order to give all students to sit near the teacher.
3. **Using Group Work** : Often there will be some students, male or female who are not comfortable speaking in front of the class. But they may feel more comfortable speaking in small groups. In order to give all students an opportunity to take part in class, try doing some activities in small groups of three to four students.
4. **Addressing Students Equally** : One of the main opportunities students have to participate in class is when they are answering teacher's questions. Teachers need to call on or talk to both female and male students in a balanced way. Research shows that both male and female teachers often call on male students to speak in class more often than female students.
5. **Provide enough wait time to answer questions** : Some students male or female may need time to think about the answer to a question when called on by a teacher. When calling on students who seem to wait longer to answer a question make sure to give students at least five seconds. Research shows that giving students more time to answer will increase the number of students who participate.
6. **Use Gender Neutral Language** : Sometimes in English people use male pronouns when referring to a group. But, this can make female students feel left out. Teachers should use gender neutral pronouns whenever possible. One example is, instead of saying "guys" when referring to a class or group say 'everybody' or 'everyone'.
7. **Body Language** : Teachers may not realize that their body language with female students might be different from what it is with male students. Whenever male or female students are talking, use respectful, listening body language. Face the listener, do not walk away, and do not interrupt students. Also move to different areas of the classroom while speaking. This is important because students sitting farther from the teacher tend to participate less.
8. **Discipline** : Be aware when male students insult female students, or female students insult male students. If the insults appear to be gender - based, students may be discouraged from participating in class in the future. Be quick to intervene and discipline the students making insults. This shows students of either gender that they will be supported. However it is important that both male and female students are given the same disciplinary reaction for the same actions.

